

# Recommending Mysteries When You Don't Care Whodunit

Yvonne Selander, Collection Management Supervisor – Somerset County Library System



## What is a Mystery?

Three factors are needed to make a mystery:

- Crime – A crime (murder, robbery, vandalism, etc.) is committed.
- Investigator – Someone tries to figure out whodunit. That special someone could be a police detective, private investigator or amateur sleuth (park ranger, chef, bounty hunter) and they usually have help from co-workers, acquaintances and friends.
- Clues and Solution – The investigator pursues clues, interviews suspects and draws conclusions. The crime is solved and usually the culprit is brought to justice (legally or morally).
  - Fourth Factor to Keep in Mind: Frame – The where and when is usually important to mystery fans.

## Subgenres:

### Police Procedural

Names to Know: Michael Connelly, Elizabeth George, Martha Grimes, P.D. James, Faye Kellerman

Also Suggest: Ken Bruen, Carol O'Connell, Mo Hayder, Ruth Rendell

### Private Investigators

Names to Know: James Lee Burke, Robert Crais, Sue Grafton, Sara Paretsky, Robert B. Parker

Also Suggest: Linda Barnes, John Lescroart, Laura Lippman, Walter Mosley, Marcia Muller

### Amateur Sleuth

Names to Know: Nevada Barr, Carol Higgins Clark, Diane Mott Davidson, Janet Evanovich

Also Suggest: Jan Burke, Mary Jane Clark, Cleo Coyle, Elly Griffiths, Dana Stabenow, Kate White

## Sub-Subgenres:

### Historical

Names to Know: Anne Perry, Victoria Thompson, Charles Todd, Jacqueline Winspear

Also Suggest: Stephanie Barron, Rhys Bowen, Laurie R. King, Louise Penny

## **Foreign**

Names to Know: Tana French, Stieg Larsson, Donna Leon, Jo Nesbo, Henning Mankell

Also Suggest: Arnaldur Indridason, Lars Kepler, Camilla Lackberg, Luiz Alfredo Garcia-Roza,

## **Five Midlist Titles to Suggest:**

### Unwanted by Kristina Ohlsson (Foreign, Police Procedural)

A mother leaves her sleeping child on a delayed train while she steps onto the platform to place a phone call. While the mother helps a woman in distress the train pulls away. Frantic the mother has the train called and a conductor watches over the sleeping girl as the train continues to Stockholm. A fight breaks out in another train car and he leaves the girl's side for no more than three minutes. During those three minutes the train pulls into the station. When he returns to the girl's seat she is gone. But something doesn't seem right. No one remembers seeing the girl leave the train and her shoes were left behind. Hours have passed and still no word of the girl. You know this is a story that will not have a happy ending.

### Gods of Gotham by Lyndsay Faye (Historical, Police Procedural)

The story takes place at the inception of the NYPD in 1845. Timothy Wilde, a former bartender needing to take on a new profession, is recruited by newly formed police force. One of his first cases is to investigate the murder of a young boy. The body was mutilated, the spleen removed. The cross like cut on the body points towards a religious crime, and with hatred of the Catholics, primarily Irish immigrants, heating up in the city, a resolution to the murder is of the utmost importance.

### Gone by Mo Hayder (Police Procedural)

Carjacking is on the rise in Bristol. Just last year a jacker took two cars with little girls in the backseat. Thankfully both cars were abandoned a short way away from where they were stolen and the little girls were fine. Now a third car is taken with a young girl in the back seat. DI Caffery figures the car and the girl will turn up soon. The clock is ticking and neither the car nor the girl has turned up. Is it a new carjacker? Was the criminal after the car? Or was he intending to kidnap the child?

### Last Rituals by Yrsa Sigurdardottir (Foreign, Amateur Sleuth)

The body of a graduate student researching the witch trials in Iceland is found dead at the college. His body has been mutilated and it looks like it could be ritualistic. The student was the son of a wealthy German family and they have retained an investigator of sorts named Matthew. Matthew speaks no Icelandic so he hires an Icelandic lawyer, Thora, to translate and aid him in his search for the killer. The Icelandic police have a suspect in custody but the family is not convinced of his guilt.

### The Chalk Girl by Carol O'Connell (Police Procedural)

This is a creepy, slightly gory, complex crime novel. There is a serial killer at work and the actions of the present have a definite beginning in the past. The start of each chapter is an excerpt of the diary of a young boy who died years before but we don't know why or how his story fits, but we know that something horrible happened to him and it is the reason (somehow!) of what is happening in the Ramble of Central Park now. Thoroughly engaging page turner!

### More Resources:

BEST mystery resource on the web: [www.stopyourekillngme.com](http://www.stopyourekillngme.com) – If you're looking for a mystery set in a particular location, with a sleuth of a particular profession, you name it, you can find a list here.

There are numerous mystery organizations out there which give awards, but these are the four major organizations:

- Agatha Awards – Given by Malice Domestic to honor “traditional mysteries” ([www.malicedomestic.org](http://www.malicedomestic.org))
- Anthony Awards – Awarded at the Bouchercon World Mystery Convention ([www.bouchercon.info/index.html](http://www.bouchercon.info/index.html))
- Dagger Awards – Given by the Crime Writers' Association which is based in the U.K. – includes an award for best historical mystery ([www.thecwa.co.uk](http://www.thecwa.co.uk))
- Edgar Allan Poe Awards – Presented by Mystery Writers of America ([www.theedgars.com](http://www.theedgars.com))

## Recommending Romance When You're Not in the Mood

Monica Teixeira, Reference Librarian – Monroe Township Public Library

### Romance Genre and Subgenres:

You will find varying lists of the romance genre depending on the source. Some lists will fine tune the category into a tiny little pigeon hole (example – “*Contemporary: Positive Growth-From Hostility or Trauma*” as well as “*Paranormal: Vampire*”) [www.eyeronromance.com](http://www.eyeronromance.com) . The same title might also fit into a few different categories (subgenres). Regardless, at the heart of the matter is a love story with an eventual happy ending. Some series romances make you wait for that happiness but in the end it does arrive. It's what keeps readers coming back for more!

Here is a sample of some broad subgenres as described by the *Romance Writers of America* along with some go-to authors which I included:

- **Contemporary Romance**  
Series romance novels that focus primarily on the romantic relationship and typically set after 1945.
  - *Go-to authors:* Jennifer Cruise, Lisa Kleypas, Debbie Macomber, Susan Mallery, Nora Roberts, Susan Elizabeth Phillips, Susan Wiggs, Sherry Woods



- **Historical Romance**

Romance novels set in any time period prior to 1945, and taking place in any location.

- *Go-to authors:* Mary Balogh, Jane Feather, Julie Garwood, Philippa Gregory, Eloisa James, Johanna Lindsey, Mary Jo Putney, LaVryle Spencer, Sherry Thomas

- **Inspirational Romance**

Romance novels in which religious or spiritual beliefs are a major part of the romantic relationship.

- *Go-to authors:* Wanda E. Brunstetter, Dee Henderson, Karen Kingsbury, Francine Rivers, Beverly Lewis, Irene Hannon, Marta Perry, Lori Wick

- **Paranormal Romance**

Romance novels in which the future, a fantasy world, or paranormal happenings are an integral part of the plot.

- *Go-to authors:* Kresley Cole, Christine Feehan, Heather Graham, Sherrilyn Kenyon, Karen Marie Moning, Maggie Shayne, J.R. Ward

- **Regency Romance**

Romance novels in which the majority of the story is set against the Regency period of the British Empire. (1790-1820 more or less)

- *Go-to authors:* Jo Beverly, Suzanne Enoch, Elizabeth Hoyt, Stephanie Laurens, Barbara Metzger, Kasey Michaels, Julia Quinn, Lauren Willig

- **Romantic Suspense**

Romance novels in which suspense, mystery, or thriller elements constitute an integral part of the plot.

- *Go-to authors:* Suzanne Brockmann, Barbara Delinsky, Linda Howard, Jayne Ann Krentz (aka Amanda Quick), Elizabeth Lowell, Carla Neggers, Karen Robards, Nora Roberts

- **Young Adult Romance**

Novels with a strong romantic theme geared toward young adult readers.

- *Go-to authors:* Melissa De La Cruz, Maureen Johnson, Julie Kagawa, Lauren Kate, Lauren Oliver, Alyson Noel, Stephanie Perkins, Elizabeth Scott, Kieran Scott

**Awards:**

- [Romance Writers of America](http://www.rwa.org) – RITA Awards [www.rwa.org](http://www.rwa.org)
- [Romantic Times](http://www.rtbookreviews.com) - Reviewers' Choice Awards [www.rtbookreviews.com](http://www.rtbookreviews.com)
- [All About Romance](http://www.likesbooks.com) - Reader Awards [www.likesbooks.com](http://www.likesbooks.com)

**Titles to Suggest:**

**A Discovery of Witches** (All Souls Trilogy #1) by Deborah Harkness

In this, her fiction debut novel, Deborah Harkness offers a paranormal romance with magical objects and creatures including vampires, witches and goblins. Add suspense, history, taboo love, British intellectuals and some New England charm and you've got a winner! Best part is that book 2 of the trilogy **Shadow of Night** is due out next month.

### **A Matter of Class** by Mary Balogh

This regency romance is a quick and enjoyable read. The story revolves around two neighbors. One is a self-made man who wishes to be accepted into high society... and his wayward son. The other is an Earl who will not acknowledge a working man as his equal regards of his wealth... and his wayward daughter. The parents come to agree that getting their children together might be good business after all. The young couple find this union difficult to deal with due to a matter of class.

### **Ever After** by Karen Kingsbury

This is the sequel to **Even Now**. With the help of their daughter, who they didn't even know had survived, Army man Shane is reunited with his long lost love Lauren, a war correspondent. Shane is proud of his military job while Lauren reports on all that is wrong about the war. Shane believes they can work things out but Lauren feels the need to get away and hopes a higher power will help her with the answers. Meanwhile, their daughter falls for an army reservist who is called into duty. This is a sweet story that touches on personal beliefs, politics, true love and a strong faith.

### **Suite Scarlett** by Maureen Johnson

Scarlett and her family manage and live in a shabby hotel in NYC. As each child in the family turns 15 they are assigned a suite within the hotel to manage. Scarlett has just turned 15 and is no sooner given the responsibility of the Empire Suite when a former C-list starlet moves in. Well there goes Scarlett's summer! She has her running around in circles trying to please this demanding, eccentric woman. Things get more interesting when a gorgeous actor moves to town and Scarlett thinks she's in love. There's wonderful family dynamics, drama, a diva and a really good time!

### **Romance Genre Websites:**

[www.rtbookreviews.com/](http://www.rtbookreviews.com/): *RT Book Reviews – read smarter!*

This is the Romantic Times magazine website. It's a professional industry site that allows searching by the genre's sub-categories. It contains over 40,000 reviews and includes a daily blog, additional links and giveaways. It's very well organized and has something for everyone interested in romance fiction.

[www.rwa.org/](http://www.rwa.org/): *Romance Writers of America*

While website's main mission is to promote and support writers it also is a wonderful resource for locating award winning titles and authors. They are the "gold standard" when it comes to the genre. They include a tab for booksellers and librarians that has some interesting statistics.

[www.eyeronromance.com/](http://www.eyeronromance.com/): *Eye on Romance – online fiction community for readers and authors*

Reviews are written by volunteers and rated on a scale of 1-10. There are links to author websites along with a brief author biography. There's no text box for searching – it's a simple browse by author, title, sub-genre or series. If you're an author you may request that your book be reviewed through a review submission form.

[allromancewriters.com/](http://allromancewriters.com/): *All Romance Writers*

Reviews are submitted by volunteers and rated on a scale of 1-10. The review includes a link to individual author's complete book list. A neat feature: search by "hero" or "heroine" using a drop down menu of popular leading characters. A link is provided for anyone wishing to sign up to be one of their reviewers.

[theromancereader.com/](http://theromancereader.com/): *The Romance Reader – the very latest news and views of romance novels*

Reviews are written by eleven part time contributors who rate a title on a 1-5 "hearts" scale based on readability. There is also a very useful "sensuality rating" based on sexual content which ranges from a "G"- love scenes with little or no sex to a "NC-17" described as "Ouch! Don't burn yourself. This book is hot, hot, hot!" Another feature is a link to their reader's top 150 romantic movie titles.

[www.likesbooks.com/](http://www.likesbooks.com/)

*All About Romance – the back fence for lovers of romance novels*

Simple, user friendly website includes reviews based on letter grades A – F. This from their own “mission statement”: Although staffed by unpaid volunteer writers and editors, AAR is run like a professional publication. AAR has been online since 1996. They also include a 5-tier sensuality rating scale from “kisses” to “burning”.

## Recommending a Gentle Read when you like to be kept up at night

Brenda Muhlbaier – Circulation Manager – Gloucester County Library

### What is a Gentle Read?

Gentle Reads are ‘feel-good’ books. They are cheerful, hopeful stories, told from a peaceful, soothing perspective.



### Characteristics of Gentle Reads:

- Tone is the key in the unpretentious, upbeat, evocative stories that touch the heart. They are ‘old-fashioned’ stories that reflect traditional, rather than modern, values.
- Language may be colorful, homespun, or even sophisticated, but the style is generally not complex. These novels generally contain no profanity.
- Characters are comfortable companions, who may also be the source of the humor that lightens the tone of these books.
- Story lines emphasize relationships among characters, rather than suspense or controversial social issues. Genial humor often underlines these stories, and there is no explicit sex or violence.
- Settings may be historical or contemporary and are usually in a small town, enclosed community, or rural area. Domestic pleasures often frame these novels.
- Gentle pacing creates a leisurely story filled with affable characters and no unsettling surprises.

Key Authors: Jennifer Chiaverini, Alexander McCall Smith, Adriana Trigiani, Debbie Macomber

Classic Authors: Elizabeth Cadell, Elizabeth Gouge, Miss, Read, D. E. Stevenson

### Gentle Reads Authors in the genres

Adrenaline:	Gilbert Morris
Fantasy:	Richard Bach, George MacDonald
Historical Fiction:	Richard Paul Evans, Robin Lee Hatcher
Humor:	Clyde Edgerton, Paul Gallico, Garrison Keillor, Angela Thirkell, Adriana Trigiani
Inspirational:	Josephe Girzone, Philip Gully, Jan Karon
Literary:	Kaye Gibbons, Eudora Welty
Mystery:	Alexander McCall Smith
Romance:	Debbie Macomber, Robin Pilcher, Nicholas Sparks
Romantic Suspense:	Barbara Michaels, Phyllis Whitney
Travel:	Peter Mayle
Westerns:	Brock and Bodie Thoene

Women's Lives: Debbie Macomber, Sharon Owens, Rosamunde Pilcher, Jeanne Ray, Adriana Trigiani

## 5 Sure Bets:

### Walking Across Egypt by Clyde Edgerton

She has as much business keeping a stray dog as she would walking across Egypt—which not so incidentally is the title of her favorite hymn. She's Mattie Rigsbee, an independent, strong-minded senior citizen who, at seventy-eight, might be slowing down just a bit. When teenage delinquent Wesley Benfield drops in on her life, he is even less likely a companion than the stray dog. But, of course, the dog never tasted her mouth-watering pound cake. Wise and witty, down-home and real, *Walking Across Egypt* is a book for everyone.

### The Persian Pickle Club by Sandra Dallas

It is the 1930s, and hard times have hit Harveyville, Kansas, where the crops are burning up, and there's not a job to be found. For Queenie Bean, a young farm wife, a highlight of each week is the gathering of the Persian Pickle Club, a group of local ladies dedicated to improving their minds, exchanging gossip, and putting their quilting skills to good use. When a new member of the club stirs up a dark secret, the women must band together to support and protect one another.

### At Home in Mitford by Jan Karon

Father Tim, a cherished small-town rector, is the steadfast soldier in this beloved slice of life story set in an American village where the grass is still green, the pickets are still white, and the air still smells sweet. The rector's forthright secretary, Emma Garret, worries about her employer, as she sees past his Christian cheerfulness into his aching loneliness. Slowly but surely, the empty places in Father Tim's heart do get filled. First with a gangly stray dog, later with a seemingly stray boy, and finally with the realization that he is stumbling into love with his independent and Christian-wise next-door neighbor. Much more than a gentle love story, this is a homespun tale about a town of endearing characters.

### To Dance with the White Dog by Terry Kay

Sam Peek's children are worried. Since that "saddest day" when Cora, his beloved wife of fifty-seven good years, died, no one knows how he will survive. How can this elderly man live alone on his farm? And when Sam begins telling his children about a dog as white as the pure driven snow -- that seems invisible to everyone but him -- his children think that grief and old age have finally taken their toll. But whether the dog is real or not, Sam Peek -- "one of the smartest men in the South when it comes to trees" -- outsmarts them all. Sam and the White Dog will dance from the pages of this bittersweet novel and into your heart, as they share the mystery of life, and begin together a warm and moving final rite of passage.

### Pontoon: A Lake Wobegon Novel by Garrison Keillor

Evelyn Peterson, a sprightly 82-year-old whose secret life of romance and adventure is revealed after her death. Her daughter, Barbara, a please-everyone type with a fondness for chocolate liqueur, finds Evelyn dead in bed, and things snowball from there. Debbie Detmer, who made

her fortune as an animal therapist for the rich and famous, is planning a grand commitment ceremony (on a pontoon boat in Lake Wobegon) to celebrate her relationship with a private jet time-share salesman. Meanwhile, Barbara plans to carry out her mother's wishes for a cremation ceremony involving a bowling ball filled with her ashes, and then there's the group of Danish Lutheran ministers stopping by Lake Wobegon on their tour of the U.S.

## Websites:

Hennepin County Library has a current list of gentle reads.

<http://www.hclib.org/pub/bookspace/FindAGoodBook.cfm?Genre=fiction>

FictionL mailing list subscribers compiled a list of gentle reads titled 'Gentle but not Religious Fiction'.

<http://www.webrary.org/rs/flbklists/gentlenotreligious.html>

The Cozy Library is not just for mysteries but for all kinds of 'feel good' reads. There are links to author websites and reviews of general fiction, nonfiction, and mysteries.

<http://cozylibrary.com/>

Good Reads has a list of 'Popular Gentle Read Books'.

<http://www.goodreads.com/shelf/show/gentle-read>

## Awards:

Agatha Awards – traditional mystery

Christy Awards – Christian fiction



Rita Awards – best inspirational romance category

## Recommending SF/Fantasy...

### When You're Lost In Space in the Middle of the Knight

Joanne Cronin, Readers Services Librarian, Morris County Library, Whippany



## Speculative Fiction: Science Fiction/Fantasy

**Definition:** Speculative fiction asks, "What if..." or "If this goes on...?"

### Science Fiction:

Speculative fiction, often set in the future, that explores moral, social, intellectual, philosophical and ethical questions against a setting outside of everyday reality

### Appeal factors:

SF writers extrapolate trends in society and technology into the future and place humans in situations exploring these different circumstances. Worldbuilding is an important consideration, and SF authors often tend to create series books following characters or activities in their particular world. Scientific and technical details matter more in "hard" science fiction, while "soft" SF tends to focus on philosophical and/or social issues.

Short stories and novellas thrive in SF/Fantasy, and anthologies are plentiful, as well as good places to find up-and-coming authors.

### **Science Fiction Subgenres:**

- *Space Opera*: Adventures set in space, often with war or exploration as frames. David Weber, *Honor Harrington* series.
- *Cyberpunk*: All-pervasive technology, with heroes fighting against authority. William Gibson's *Neuromancer* created and exemplifies the genre. SF's closest thing to noir.
- *Time Travel*: Deliberate or accidental travel to the past or future, with present or future implications. Connie Willis, Kage Baker, Steven Barnes, Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*.
- *Alternative History*: What if Oswald had missed? What if Germany had won? Stories that take history in a different direction. Harry Turtledove, Steven Barnes, Philip K. Dick's *Man in the High Castle*.
- *Dystopia/End of the World*: The cataclysm is here, or afterwards. Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*, Larry Niven, *Lucifer's Hammer*, Kim Stanley Robinson, *Forty Signs of Rain*

### **SF Authors to Know:**

Greg Bear, Lois McMaster Bujold, Robert Heinlein, Frank Herbert, Ursula Le Guin, Anne McCaffrey, Kim Stanley Robinson, David Weber, Connie Willis

### **Others to suggest:**

Catherine Asaro, Ben Bova, Jack McDevitt, Elizabeth Moon, John Scalzi, Dan Simmons

### **Some favorite titles:**

John Scalzi, *Old Man's War*

John Perry celebrated his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday by visiting his wife's grave and joining the army.

James S. A. Corey, *Leviathan Wakes*

Someone just blew apart a freighter in the asteroid belt. Is it the Outer Planet revolutionaries or someone else?

Connie Willis, *All About Emily*

A fading actress finds her career in jeopardy – from a stage-struck android.

### **Fantasy:**

Speculative fiction based on magic or myth. The plots usually emphasize journeys, either physical or psychological, and stress the importance of human virtues through individual acts of courage, sacrifice, and kindness. (ALA Adult Reading Round Table)

### **Appeal Factors:**

Fantasy writers build worlds as well, but use magic instead of technology to illustrate relationships, characters, and life experiences. Fantasy authors also tend to create sagas or multivolume series in particular worlds, past, present, imaginary, or mythological. The journey, inner and/or outer, is a key frame.

### **Fantasy Subgenres:**

- *Alternate/Parallel Worlds*: Jacqueline Carey, *Kushiel's Legacy* series, Orson Scott Card's *Tales of Alvin Maker* series
- *Epic Fantasy*: *Lord of the Rings*, J.R.R. Tolkien: *A Song of Ice and Fire*, George R.R. Martin
- *Fairy Tales*: Stories recasting fairy tales and folklore in unexpected ways. William Goldman's *Princess Bride*, Mercedes Lackey, Patricia McKillip
- *Humorous Fantasy*: Satire and/or puns, and preposterous situations. Terry Pratchett, *Discworld* series, Piers Anthony, *Xanth* series
- *Magic and Wizards*: J. K. Rowling, Lev Grossman, C.J. Cherryh's *Fortress* series
- *Urban Fantasy*: Fantasy taking place in the contemporary world, often in cities or suburbia. Kim Harrison, *The Hollows* series, Jim Butcher, *Harry Dresden* series, Charles de Lint
- *Steampunk*: Combines Victorian-era mores and machinery. Cherie Priest, Gail Carriger

#### **Fantasy Authors to Know:**

Piers Anthony, Terry Brooks, Jim Butcher, David Eddings, Robert Jordan, George R. R. Martin, China Mieville, Terry Pratchett, Brandon Sanderson

#### **More to Suggest:**

Jacqueline Carey, Guy Gavriel Kay, Katherine Kurtz, Mercedes Lackey, Michael Moorcock, Roger Zelazny

#### **A couple recent titles:**

Laura Anne Gilman, *Tricks of the Trade*

CSI New York with a twist. Paranormal Unaffiliated Private Investigations hunts down crimes of magic that the non-Talented NYPD can't touch.

Jo Walton, *Among Others*

A troubled teenager seeking refuge from her mother's magic finds comfort and friendship in science fiction books and fellow readers. Nebula Award winner.

#### **Web Resources:** On beyond NovelList.

Locus Online

[www.locusmag.com](http://www.locusmag.com)

Fantastic Fiction

[www.fantasticfiction.co.uk](http://www.fantasticfiction.co.uk)

SFF Net

[www.sff.net](http://www.sff.net)

Internet Speculative Fiction Database

[www.isfdb.org/cgi-bin/index.cgi](http://www.isfdb.org/cgi-bin/index.cgi)

#### **Awards**

Hugo Award: Given at the World Science Fiction Convention

Nebula Award: Given by members of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers Association

World Fantasy Award: Given at the World Fantasy Convention

Mythopoeic Award: Given at the annual Mythcon by a Mythopoeic Society committee

## Recommending Women's Fiction When You Don't Read Books with Pink Covers

C. L. Quillen, Coordinator of Public Services -- Old Bridge Public Library



## What is Women's Fiction?

- Nora Roberts says, "Women's Fiction is a story that centers on a woman or on primarily women's issues, not necessarily the romantic relationship based books I do, but the woman's story."
- The Florida Writers Association defines women's fiction as: "Fiction which includes subjects and themes that range far beyond romance. The woman is the star of the story and her changes and emotional developments are the subject. Relationships are at the core of the plot. Could involve relationships with siblings, parents, friends and not necessarily just a lover. Doesn't have to have the standard "happy ending" but there is a life-affirming resolution to the story. Focuses on the hopes, fears, dreams and even secret fantasies of women today."

## Subgenres

- Chick Lit is coming of age stories about women in their twenties and thirties; humorous stories about young women dealing with friendships, marriage, motherhood, divorce, career choices, death, etc; often have an urban setting.
- Women's Lives and Relationships is very similar to Chick Lit, but the characters are older. Relationships are central to the plot, but they're not necessarily romantic relationships. They may be mother/child, a group of friends or co-workers. A romantic relationship is often part of the plot.

## Names to Know

Cecelia Ahern  
Mary Kay Andrews  
Stacey Ballis  
Elizabeth Berg  
Maeve Binchy  
Meg Cabot  
Laura Dave  
Barbara Delinsky  
Marisa De Los Santos  
Emily Giffin

Jane Green  
Joshilyn Jackson  
Beth Kendrick  
Marian Keyes  
Cassandra King  
Sophie Kinsella  
Christina Baker Kline  
Cathy Lamb  
Lorna Landvik  
Debbie Macomber

Jill Mansell  
Laura Moriarty  
Liane Moriarty  
Elizabeth Noble  
Jeanne Ray  
Allison Winn Scotch  
Melissa Senate  
Adriana Trigiani  
Jennifer Weiner  
Isabel Wolff

## Recent Midlist Titles to Suggest

### Meryl Streep Movie Club by Mia March (6/19/12)

Three women in their twenties--two sisters and their cousin-- have to find a way to reconnect and help each other as they face hard times and difficult choices. March uses Meryl Streep's movies to frame each woman's problems and help her to start resolving them. While the main characters are in their 20s, the aunt/mother of the women also plays a big role and the issues that the women are facing make this a book which will appeal to readers who are no longer 20-something. Recommend to readers who enjoyed Elizabeth Noble's The Reading Group.

### Wife 22 by Melanie Gideon (5/29/12)

Alice Buckle is stuck in a rut. Then she gets an anonymous survey in her email on "Marriage in the 21st Century" and becomes Wife 22. Through emails she connects with Researcher 101 and it changes her whole life. For fans of Bridget Jones and Kate Reddy (*I Don't Know How She Does It*), Alice Buckle could be their slightly older sister. A thought provoking look at the modern marriage, Wife 22 has all the right stuff for a lively book discussion.

### These Girls by Sarah Pekkanen (April 2012)

Cate and Renee are casual friends, coworkers at *Gloss* magazine and roommates. Abby's brother Trey asks them to take in his sister who abruptly left her nanny job in DC. Each girl has a secret that is getting in her way of happiness. Pekkanen's characters are likable and you want to keep reading to find out what happens to each of these girls. Recommend to readers who like Jennifer Weiner and Emily Giffin.

### A Rural Affair by Catherine Alliott (March 2012)

Poppy often fantasized about her husband's death, but when a freak accident brings about his demise, she finds it more difficult than she thought to manage on her own. Phil had a secret life and his mistress is just one of many colorful characters in this tale about village life in the British countryside. Recommend to readers who like Marian Keyes and Wendy Holden.

## More Resources:

- Hill, Nanci Milone. (2012) *Reading Women: A Book Club Guide for Women's Fiction*. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited. Book club guides for 90 women's fiction titles plus additional titles to consider, and reading group resources.
- Vnuk, Rebecca. (2009). *Read On... Women's Fiction*. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited. Annotated thematic booklists broken down by the 5 main appeal factors.
- **Chick Lit Club:** <http://www.chicklitclub.com> Over 1700 reviews, 800 authors and 150 interviews
- **Chick Lit Reviews and News:** <http://chicklitreviewsandnews.com> Lists all the US book releases in 2012 by month.